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Citation for published version:

Aird, B 2008, The Boundaries of Medieval Misogyny: Gendered Urban Space in Medieval Durham. in L. Klusakova & L. Teulieres (eds), *Frontiers and Identities. Cities in Regions and Nations*. Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press, pp. 49-73. <<http://www.clioheres.net/books3/books.php?book=5>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

Frontiers and Identities. Cities in Regions and Nations

Publisher Rights Statement:

© Aird, B. (2008). The Boundaries of Medieval Misogyny: Gendered Urban Space in Medieval Durham. In L. Klusakova, & L. Teulieres (Eds.), *Frontiers and Identities. Cities in Regions and Nations*. (pp. 49-73). Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press.

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Frontiers and identities : cities in regions and nations / edited by Lud'a Klusáková and Laure Teulières. - Pisa : Plus-Pisa university press, 2008. – (Thematic work group. 5, Frontiers and identities; 3)
302.5 (21.)

1. Individuo e società 2. Identità <psicologia sociale> I. Klusáková, Lud'a II. Teulières, Laure

CIP a cura del Sistema bibliotecario dell'Università di Pisa

This volume is published thanks to the support of the Directorate General for Research of the European Commission, by the Sixth Framework Network of Excellence CLIOHRES.net under the contract CIT3-CT-2005-006164.

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Cover: Paul Klee (1879-1940), *Rocky Coast*, 1931, oil on plywood, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle.
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Published by Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press

Lungarno Pacinotti, 43

56126 Pisa

Tel. 050 2212056 – Fax 050 2212945

info.plus@adm.unipi.it

www.edizioniplus.it - Section "Biblioteca"

Member of



Association of American
University Presses

ISBN: 978-88-8492-556-5

Linguistic revision

Kieran Hoare, Rhys Morgan, Gerald Power

Informatic editing

Răzvan Adrian Marinescu

The Boundaries of Medieval Misogyny: Gendered Urban Space in Medieval Durham

WILLIAM M. AIRD
Cardiff University

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the relationship between the medieval Church and an urban community in the North-East of England in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. It highlights the nature of the precincts that surrounded medieval churches through an investigation of the local tradition that St Cuthbert, the patron of the Cathedral of Durham, excluded women from a defined area surrounding his shrine. The chapter refers to the grant of an ecclesiastical immunity, namely the right of sanctuary, to the Church of St Cuthbert. In effect, this grant created a *sanctus locus* [sacred space] within the medieval city of Durham, which was also the foundation of the unusually strong local power wielded by the medieval bishops of Durham within their city and diocese. The exclusion of women from the cathedral-priory and its cemetery made the ecclesiastical precinct a “gendered” as well as a “sacred space”. It is suggested that the two phenomena are related and demonstrate the importance of mental as well as physical boundaries in the medieval urban landscape. The origins of the misogynistic prohibition can be associated with the introduction in 1083 of the monastic Rule of St Benedict by Bishop William of Saint-Calais (1081-1096), but was most probably a response to problems encountered by the monastic community during the pontificate of Bishop Ranulf Flambard (1099-1128). Finally, the chapter questions whether this exclusion of women was rigidly enforced drawing on evidence that suggests that they were in fact welcomed at Cuthbert’s shrine as circumstances changed. It concludes by pointing out that boundaries can be conceptual as well as physical and that tradition, however atavistic it may seem, can be invented and, like those boundaries, periodically renegotiated.

Countess Judith of Northumbria was a pious and inquisitive woman¹. Her piety was expressed through gifts made jointly with her husband, Earl Tostig, to St Cuthbert, the greatest of the medieval saints of Northern England. The couple had made dona-

tions to the saint's church at Durham and promised more including landed estates. However, there was a condition: the Countess wanted to be able to enter the cathedral that housed Cuthbert's relics and worship at his tomb. There was also a problem: St Cuthbert had banned any woman from entering his church. Judith decided to test the saint's prohibition². According to an early 12th-century history of the Church of St Cuthbert:

She devised the plan of sending one of her servants ahead of her, so that if she were able to do this with impunity, the mistress would follow after her and would dare to enter the church with more confidence of her safety. So when the girl had learned her mistress's will, she undertook to approach the church at a very quiet time in order to attempt this. As she was about to place her foot inside the cemetery [*cimiterium*], she was suddenly repelled by a violent force as of the wind, her strength failed [*ueluti uentorum uiolentia repelli cepit et uiribus deficere*] and stricken with a grave infirmity, she was scarcely able to return to the hospice, where falling on to her bed, she was racked with terrible torment until at length she was deprived of both the pain and her life. The countess was absolutely terrified at what had happened and began to tremble all over³.

The chastened Judith sought to make amends and with the proper humility she and Tostig arranged for an ornate crucifix to be made and presented at Cuthbert's shrine, together with images of the Blessed Virgin and John the Evangelist⁴. This account is interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it was associated with the gift of specific ornaments found in the Church of St Cuthbert. It is possible to imagine the elaborate gold and silver cross and the images of the Virgin and St John evoking memories of Tostig and Judith's rule in Northumbria, as well as a warning to observe the local prohibition on women approaching Cuthbert's shrine⁵. The story also makes it clear that the cemetery around the Church of St Cuthbert constituted a prohibited space within the medieval city of Durham and that the prohibited space was gendered, in that the ban applied only to women⁶.

The miraculous punishment of Countess Judith's maid-servant was followed in the medieval narrative by a reference to another test of St Cuthbert's power⁷. Again, during Tostig's rule in Northumbria, a notorious bandit named Aldan-Hamal, the perpetrator of many heinous crimes for which offers of monetary compensation could not make amends, escaped the earl's justice and took refuge in St Cuthbert's Church in Durham⁸. Barcwith, one of the earl's men, pursued the fugitive to the threshold of the church. He advocated breaking through the doors in order to seize Aldan-Hamal, but as soon as he had finished saying that he had no regard for the "peace of a dead man", meaning the sanctuary offered by St Cuthbert, he was struck down "as if by an arrow from above [*quasi sagitta desuper veniens*]"⁹. The writer of the miracle account had heard the story from monks who had witnessed the events as well as from Aldan-Hamal himself. Barcwith expired three days after being struck down and for six months afterwards a fetid odour emanated from his grave¹⁰. Barcwith's death terrified Earl Tostig and his men to such an extent that they abandoned their pursuit of Aldan-Hamal and even accorded

him some honour, presumably as one clearly favoured by St Cuthbert. In addition, many ornate and valuable gifts were made to the saint's shrine perhaps in expiation of the sin of attempting to break the sanctuary of the ecclesiastical precinct¹¹.

These narratives referring to events between 1055 and 1065, but written down in the early 12th century, highlight important aspects of the medieval Church's relationship with the community it served. In both accounts there are references to significant boundaries the transgression of which incurred uncompromising divine punishment. Therefore, this chapter examines the meaning of the spatial delineation of ecclesiastical power in the Middle Ages, focusing, in particular on the Church of St Cuthbert in its urban setting, the medieval city of Durham. The special status of urban "sacred space" and the social mechanisms deployed to preserve its status are discussed. The origins of the injunction against women are explored and related to the claims by St Cuthbert's Church to an ecclesiastical immunity and associated rights of sanctuary. Although it was claimed that both phenomena had their origins in the 7th century, it is argued here that they can be particularly associated with the aftermath of the reorganisation of the Church of Durham in 1083, when the rigour of the monastic *Rule of St Benedict* was imposed on the community serving the shrine of St Cuthbert. At the beginning of the 12th century the monks of Durham faced a threat from their own bishop and they responded by presenting a version of the past that served to reinforce the protected status of their abbey.

Durham is situated in the North-East of England. The city is dominated by its medieval cathedral and castle located on a plateau at the summit of a steep promontory surrounded on three sides by a loop of the River Wear. In the mid-12th century, the site of Durham was described in verse¹²:

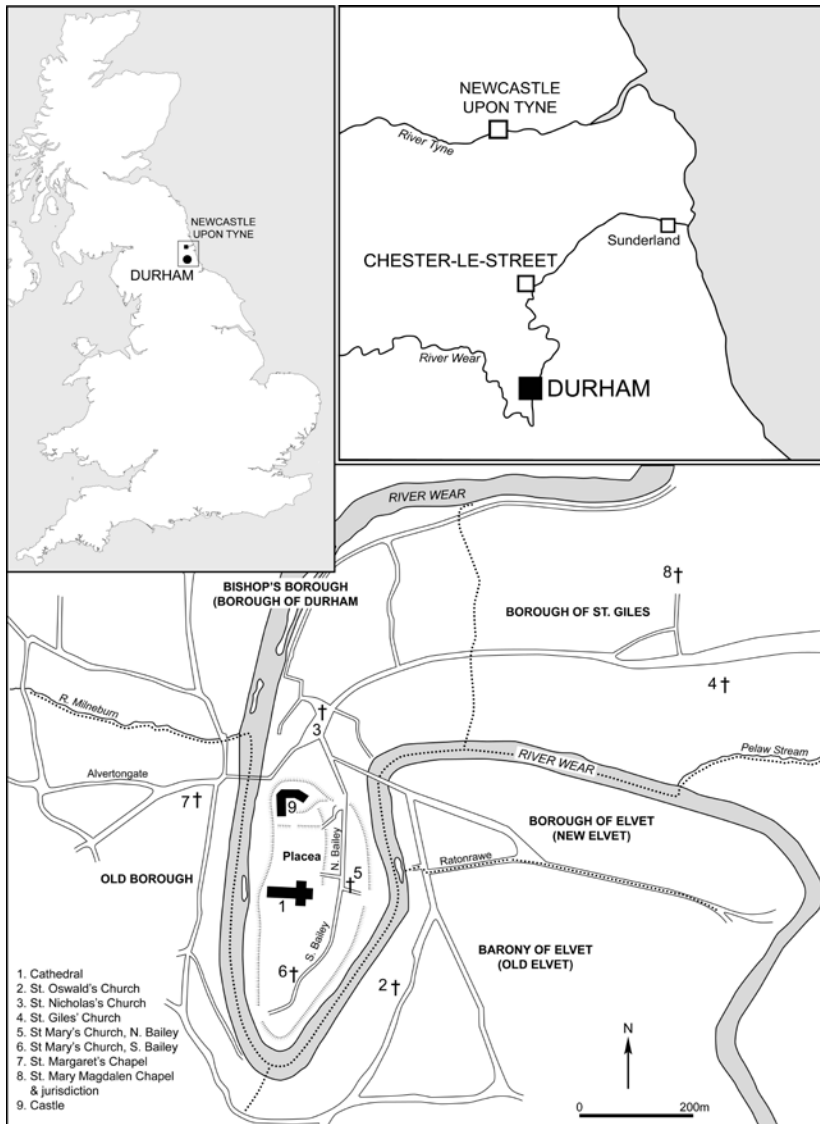
The land

Is high, its foot is stone, its sides are rough.
On all sides steep and sheer it thwarts the foe;
By river girt, it laughs at hostile troops.
The rushing river, shaped like a horse's shoe,
Surrounds the lofty site with foaming gorge.
A hill, however, splits the river's horns,
To make the lofty site peninsular.

A wide and level surface crowns the top
Of solid Durham, flat, unbroken land.
Now at the northern end a hill stands up,
But all the rest is level as a plain.
So now you know how Nature guards the place¹³.

Given Durham's proximity to a major Roman road, it seems unlikely that such an eminently defensible site was not occupied during the Roman governance of Britain¹⁴. However, the foundation of the city is usually associated with the arrival of the Com-

munity of St Cuthbert in 995¹⁵. Medieval Durham's identity was intimately connected with the presence of Cuthbert's relics and it became an important centre of pilgrimage rivalled in England only by the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury¹⁶. The original church built at Durham by Bishop Ealdhun was eventually dismantled and replaced by the Romanesque cathedral which survives today¹⁷.



Map 1.
12th-century Durham.

Facing the cathedral and dominating the narrow isthmus of land giving access to the promontory is the castle. This was the bishop's residence until the building of the palace at Bishop Auckland in the late 13th century¹⁸. The cathedral and castle are emblematic of the twin lordships which dominated the medieval city of Durham. The constituent parts of Durham, the parishes and the boroughs, were thus in the lordship of either the bishop or the monks¹⁹. Throughout the Middle Ages the bishop of Durham enjoyed a great deal of local political autonomy and it was even suggested that within his bishopric he enjoyed a Palatine status not unlike that of the King of England in the rest of the kingdom²⁰.

The development of the urban settlement which today surrounds the cathedral-castle complex has been the subject of considerable research in recent decades²¹. The borough of Elvet, which lies across the River Wear from the promontory occupied by the Community, was the earliest urban settlement at Durham served by the parish church of St Oswald²². By the later medieval period the city had expanded and it is estimated that its population had reached perhaps 4000 or so by the 16th century, making it a medium-sized English town. The spiritual needs of this population were served by six parish churches in addition to the cathedral-priory²³.

A number of methodological approaches have been employed to study medieval urban topography²⁴. For example, archaeological investigations and "plan analysis" are used to understand the growth, morphological changes, and internal divisions of medieval towns. Urban boundaries have been mapped and they are interpreted as marking stages in the development of the town and defining zones characterised by specific occupations or types of habitation²⁵. Similarly, topographers have attempted to identify the original nucleus of urban settlements and from there tracing the history of the city's territorial expansion and contraction.

Methodologies adapted from social and cultural anthropology also inform interpretations of the significance of urban spatial arrangements. It has been recognised that divisions in the medieval urban landscape are symbolic vehicles resonating with social meaning. Urban space was, and is, one of the instruments through which social relations are produced, reproduced and expressed. It is culturally constructed and invested with meaning by those who occupy or otherwise utilise it²⁶. An investigation of the boundaries organising the urban landscape reveals a great deal about the history, social relationships and cultural assumptions of the inhabitants, past and present, moving through, and interacting with, that environment.

Space in medieval towns was utilised in a number of ways. As well as the site of housing, commercial and industrial activities, it was also the stage for a variety of public and private rituals, through which religious beliefs and power relations of all kinds were enacted. The medieval church was particularly adept at utilising urban topography as a back-drop for its liturgical feasts, processions and ceremonies²⁷. In medieval Durham,

for example, the liturgical year was punctuated with a number of processions through the city, not only reinforcing religious belief, but also restating the urban lordship of the Church of St Cuthbert²⁸. In a similar fashion, the built environment reflects the social assumptions and aspirations of the city's inhabitants. Buildings are as much expressions of different kinds of social power as they are shelters, dwelling places or ritual spaces²⁹. For example, the great churches of medieval Europe with their variants on the cruciform ground plan literally marked the landscape, whether urban or rural, with crosses, the most potent symbols of Christianity³⁰. Therefore urban space is socially and culturally meaningful operating through a combination of the symbolic and the functional.

Prominent among the topographical features identified in medieval towns is the ecclesiastical precinct, an urban space usually focused on a major church and removed from other jurisdictions, whether royal, seigneurial or civic. In some cases, as with many medieval monasteries, those excluded from the precinct might also include the local bishop³¹. These precincts usually comprised the church together with its ancillary buildings and cemetery³². In many cases the boundaries of these precincts were marked by walls or other physical barriers punctuated by gates regulating access and egress. In the case of cathedrals or monasteries located in urban centres, the ecclesiastical precinct might constitute a significant proportion of the urban area³³.

The exceptional nature of these "sacred spaces" might be recognised and marked by the urban population in ways other than through the use of purely physical boundaries such as walls and ditches. The limits of the ecclesiastical precinct marked the separation between the sacred and the profane, the pure and the dangerous³⁴. Within the ecclesiastical precinct itself there were gradations of sacredness: some areas were more sacred than others. The church itself was the focus of concentric circles of numinous power. In most cases the high altar at the east end of the church, together with the shrine of the patron saint, was the most restricted area³⁵. Access to these differentiated zones of sacred space within the precinct was regulated and before individuals were allowed to approach the more sacred areas, their social or spiritual status was assessed by members of the community in order to determine whether they were worthy of the privilege of access³⁶. Unauthorised entry threatened to pollute the *sanctus locus* thereby compromising the religious practices carried out there.

In the later Middle Ages gatehouses and walls provided formidable physical boundaries, but the Church also made use of popular religious beliefs in order to erect mental boundaries and enforce and protect the ecclesiastical enclosure³⁷. It was accepted that God and his saints took an active role in the protection of the holy places of medieval Europe. There are many narrative accounts of saints intervening in worldly affairs to protect those who served their shrines³⁸. Within the ecclesiastical enclosure "Church Peace" operated theoretically protecting people and their property taking refuge there³⁹. Related to this idea is that of the sanctuary of the church where fugitives might seek protection for a certain number of days. This respite allowed the parties

involved to reach a settlement usually involving monetary compensation for the alleged crimes⁴⁰. Fines were levied on those who breached the sanctuary and these increased the closer the intruder approached the most sacred space in the precinct, usually the saint's shrine⁴¹. Medieval narratives express horror at breaches of "Church Peace" or sanctuary, although the fact that such incidents were recorded suggests that not everyone was deterred by the threat of supernatural retribution⁴².

However, the division between the sacred and profane should not be exaggerated. Like most frontiers or boundaries, that surrounding the ecclesiastical precinct was permeable. Medieval churches required the support of the laity and could not afford to exclude them completely even if that had been possible. Members of the laity were pilgrims and parishioners and provided food and drink, building materials, and other forms of non-clerical expertise to the Church. Even monastic houses, whose very ethos was founded on the principles of enclosure and separation, relied on a small army of seculars to supply their more mundane needs⁴³. Those in monastic orders had families who visited the abbey and there are cases of the widowed mothers of monks joining their sons in retirement. Relatives might also seek burial in the abbey's churchyard, and, in a place of honour, benefiting from their proximity in death to the power of the *sanctus locus*⁴⁴. Major churches were the economic foci of many towns and as well as providing employment, attracted markets and fairs. Many of the latter were held in the advantageous surroundings of the ecclesiastical precinct, where "Church Peace" and exemption from tolls and other taxes operated. In short, these enclosures were regularly visited by the laity and were used for a plethora of non-religious activities. With these general observations in mind, it is time to return to St Cuthbert's gynophobia.

The ban on women entering St Cuthbert's church was first recorded in Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de Exordio*⁴⁵. None of the early medieval hagiographies or histories hints at any misogyny on Cuthbert's part⁴⁶. In fact according to the earliest *Vite*, Cuthbert, who died in 687, seems have been on very good terms with women⁴⁷. According to Symeon, Cuthbert's antipathy originated after a fire at the "double-monastery" of Coldingham (Berwickshire, Scotland):

Everyone who was in a position to know, however, was aware that this had really happened because of the evil ways of the inhabitants. In that same place [i.e. Coldingham] indeed there were congregations of monks and nuns, albeit living separately in different dwellings, which had gradually fallen away from the discipline of the Rule and had, by their improper familiarity with each other, given the Enemy the opportunity of ensnaring them. For the cells which had been made for the purpose of prayer and reading they converted into dens of feasting, drinking, story-telling and other enticements⁴⁸.

Cuthbert "severed his monks from all female company" so that through "the indiscreet association of women with God's servants the monks should not endanger their resolve and so ruin them, thereby giving joy to the Enemy"⁴⁹. Symeon goes on to say that with the agreement of all, "both men and women" Cuthbert "forbade to his monks then and in

the future all female company and he completely removed from women the right of entry to his church⁵⁰." Symeon ends his account by noting that:

This custom is still meticulously observed today [i.e. early 12th century], to such an extent that women are not even given permission to enter the cemeteries [*cimiteria*] of those churches where his body rested for a time, unless they are forced to seek refuge there, either from fear of enemy attack, or because the place where they are living has been burned down⁵¹.

Thus Symeon suggested that the exclusion of women applied to all those churches in which the saint's body had rested after his death in 687, a reference to relocations of Cuthbert's cult centre. During Scandinavian attacks on Northumbria in the 9th and tenth centuries, the community serving Cuthbert's shrine abandoned Lindisfarne in 876 and wandered about Northumbria until, in 883, it settled at Chester-le-Street⁵². It relocated to Durham in 995. No other evidence supports Symeon's assertions that the ban on women entering the church or its cemetery was enforced before the late 11th century. Indeed, as can be seen from the extract quoted above, Cuthbert had allowed that in certain circumstances of dire need, women might take refuge in his churches and their cemeteries. By the 11th century the *Haliwerfolc*, men and women, were accustomed to taking refuge in the cathedral at Durham, especially during attacks by the Scots⁵³.

In addition to the story of the fate of Countess Judith's maid servant, Symeon provided two other examples of women flouting St Cuthbert's ban. Immediately after the passages explaining the origins of the prohibition, Symeon tells us about Sungeova and her husband Gamel son of Bevo, who had attended a feast in the city and were making their way home one evening. Unfortunately, the street was a morass of muddy pot-holes so they decided to cross the cemetery. It is clear that Gamel and Sungeova were aware of the ban because they hoped to make amends to the saint by alms-giving at a later date. As the couple crossed the cemetery, Sungeova began to cry out that she was losing her mind. Her husband urged her on but as soon as she set foot outside the fence which surrounded the cemetery she collapsed. Gamel carried his wife home but she died that very night⁵⁴.

It is interesting to note that the denouement of Sungeova's punishment came as she stepped *out* of the cemetery across the boundary marked by a fence [*extra sepem que cimiterium ecclesie ambierat*]. As the sacred space was clearly marked by a fence there was no excuse for Sungeova's transgression. The couple were conscious of their sin and hoped that gifts to the Church might make amends. This last point about offering compensation for transgressing the boundaries of the church echoes similar demands for compensation from those, such as Barcwith, who challenged St Cuthbert's right of sanctuary.

Symeon's third example, involved the wife of a man who later joined the monastic community⁵⁵. This woman developed an uncontrollable desire to see the beautiful ornaments that decorated the Church of Durham. There is no suggestion that she wanted

to see inside the church for pious reasons, but rather out of her “womanly eagerness to see new things” [*femina aviditate uidendi noua*]. As her husband was an important man and she was used to getting her own way, she, too, set off across the cemetery but lost her mind and in her madness bit out her own tongue. Her husband tried to restrain her, but she took to wandering about until she was found one day under a tree with her throat cut, seemingly by her own hand⁵⁶. Here, it was clearly the inquisitiveness and arrogance of the woman that brought about her demise. Before leaving the subject, Symeon assured his readers that “many other divine signs against similar audacity in other women could be related⁵⁷.”

It is noticeable in all three cases cited by Symeon that the women involved knew of the prohibition yet they chose to ignore it. It is also clear that the women entered the cemetery *without permission* and suffered the consequences⁵⁸. In effect, the saint himself acted as a kind of supernatural gatekeeper patrolling the boundaries of the ecclesiastical precinct. That two of the women were driven mad suggests that the monks of Durham had successfully impressed on the minds of its parishioners the idea that Cuthbert himself guarded the privileges of his Church⁵⁹. Only Countess Judith with her desire to enter Cuthbert’s church to worship at his tomb could be construed as having a justifiable reason to test the prohibition, but even here punishment followed⁶⁰. In the other cases, Symeon suggested that the sins of pride, avarice, and the “natural” female desire just to see “new things” lay at the heart of the transgression of the boundaries of Cuthbert’s sacred space⁶¹. These stories do convey the idea that, at least for these women, an irresistible air of mystery and wonder surrounded the Church of St Cuthbert⁶².

The tradition of St Cuthbert’s misogyny was perpetuated by Reginald, another Durham monk, writing at the end of the 12th century⁶³. One of Reginald’s accounts concerning a little girl who wandered into the churchyard during a ball-game suggested that it did not matter whether women were unaware of the prohibition: even if they strayed into the churchyard by accident, they were still driven mad⁶⁴. Here, as Victoria Tudor noted, Northumbria’s greatest saint appears “vindictive and petty-minded”⁶⁵.

It seems strange that a monastic church, which relied so heavily on attracting pilgrims and their donations, should issue such a ban. To exclude more than half the number of potential visitors to the shrine was an odd decision by the monks and raises the question of how far Symeon’s account of St Cuthbert’s misogyny was an “invented tradition” designed to answer the needs of a specific set of circumstances. A closer look at the historical context of the production of Symeon’s *Libellus de Exordio* suggests that the ban was devised for a particular reason and that, as the difficulties of the monks eased so arrangements were in fact made to cater for female visitors to the shrine of St Cuthbert. However, the tradition of Cuthbert’s misogyny was never entirely forgotten and it was revived when similar threats to the monastic community materialised at later dates.

In 1083 Bishop William of Saint-Calais imposed the monastic Rule of St Benedict on the community of clerks serving the shrine of St Cuthbert at Durham⁶⁶. Bishop William had been Abbot of Saint-Vincent in Le Mans and decided to regularise the constitution of the community at Durham by introducing the Rule of St Benedict⁶⁷. Following the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the appointment of Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury, there was an attempt to reform the English Church⁶⁸. An aspect of English ecclesiastical organisation which the Norman bishops found particularly useful was the cathedral-priory because, as both diocesan and abbot, their authority over their cathedral chapters was boosted⁶⁹.

Symeon tells us that the pre-monastic community was made up of married priests who lived with their wives in close proximity to the cathedral⁷⁰. Bishop William gave them a stark choice and insisted that “those who had previously dwelt in the church, and who had been canons only by name since they in no way followed the rule of canons, should henceforth lead their lives with the monks and according to the monastic vocation if they wished to remain in the church⁷¹.” Symeon recalled that all except the dean left to be replaced by monks⁷². Thus, after 1083 the shrine of St Cuthbert was served by a cathedral-priory of Benedictine monks presided over by a prelate who was both bishop and abbot. As long as those appointed to the see of Durham were monks there was limited potential for disputes between the bishop and his monastic cathedral chapter. However, in 1099, a notorious royal “procurator” acquired the bishopric of Durham.

Ranulf Flambard was not in monastic orders. He had made a reputation as an effective, if rather unscrupulous, royal officer⁷³. His appointment to Durham called into question the relationship between the bishop and his monastic cathedral chapter. According to the constitution established by Bishop William, Ranulf was nominal abbot as well as bishop, but his instincts were wholly secular and it was not long before the monks of the cathedral priory began to feel threatened⁷⁴. Bishop Ranulf exploited the resources of his see in order to provide for members of his own family⁷⁵. He also began to abstract property from the monks in order to reward his followers and finance his ambitious building projects⁷⁶. It was said that he had also attempted to corrupt the monks with offers of forbidden foods and the company of women⁷⁷. In addition, the bishop failed to respect another important aspect of the cathedral-priory’s status, namely its right of sanctuary⁷⁸. The response of the prior and monks to this threat was to set out clearly the boundaries of the relationship between the bishop and his monastic cathedral chapter in Symeon’s *Libellus de Exordio* and other writings⁷⁹.

The misogyny attributed to St Cuthbert in the *Libellus de Exordio* was part of this defensive campaign against the new bishop. Clearly, the expulsion of the married clergy in 1083 and the establishment of a Benedictine cathedral chapter erected a new and strictly *monastic* enclosure around St Cuthbert’s Church. Women and the temptations they represented were seen as a threat to the monastic vocations of those within the precinct and from then on their ability to approach the church had to be closely regulated. The

women who had been living with members of the pre-monastic cathedral clergy were also symbolic of an older, corrupt state of affairs. Under William of Saint-Calais, bishop and monks had shared the same attitude to worldly affairs and there was no perceived threat to monastic interests. However, Symeon's work, composed during the early years of Ranulf's pontificate, suggests that the monks responded with some alarm to the changed circumstances that resulted from the appointment of this worldly cleric.

As there was no mention of St Cuthbert's prohibition on women before Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*, it looks as though this was an innovation of the early 12th century devised as a response to a new threat. The "misogyny of St Cuthbert" is, therefore, a medieval example of the familiar concept of the "invention of tradition"⁸⁰. Through their misogyny, dramatised by the supposed actions of their patron saint, the monks emphasised their separation from their unsuitable bishop and his family connections. It was essential for the monks that the new bishop respected their legal and ecclesiastical immunity and so they also emphasised the right of sanctuary. The miracle story recounting Barcwith's demise reminded the bishop and his officers not to violate the sacred space around Cuthbert's shrine. It is also tempting to see another miracle story concerning the punishment of a certain tax collector named Ranulf as a not-so-subtle warning to the bishop not to take anything further from the saint or his monks⁸¹. An apt metaphor for the growing divide between bishop and cathedral-priory in the early twelfth century was the clearing of the urban space between the monastery and the castle during Ranulf's pontificate⁸².

The prohibition against women entering the Church of St Cuthbert was also in accord with measures being taken by the Western Church as a whole to enforce clerical celibacy. One of the central policies of the papal reform movement, which began in the middle of the 11th century, was a prohibition against priests marrying or taking mistresses. It was argued that it was inappropriate for those who administered the sacraments to defile themselves and the Church through contact with women. In addition, there was the temptation for married priests to abstract ecclesiastical property to support their families. If this property then became hereditary it was lost to the Church. These prohibitions, promulgated through papal decrees, reinforced by the legislation of provincial synods, were not immediately effective, but they provided monastic writers with another opportunity to criticise their secular brethren⁸³.

Symeon's *Libellus de Exordio* contains passages expressing this antipathy towards clerical marriage. Women were intimately associated with the temptations of the flesh and the pollution of sexual intercourse, reminding us that for medieval monks the ecclesiastical precinct and the monastic enclosure separated pure, sacred space from the polluted and corrupt⁸⁴. For example, when a priest named Feoccher presumed to celebrate Mass after sleeping with a woman the night before, the bread and wine took on the appearance of pitch⁸⁵. In a more elaborate passage, Symeon recorded the vision of Boso, one of Bishop William's knights⁸⁶. On recovering from a severe illness which rendered

him unconscious for three days, Boso made a public confession before the prior of Durham⁸⁷. He reported that he had had a vision of the Otherworld and had been taken by a spirit guide to a large plain where he had seen a procession of monks, most of whom had been admitted to a walled garden. Two monks were excluded because of their sins. Boso also saw the native English inhabitants of Northumbria “puffed up with arrogance”, but they soon vanished to be followed by a group of even more arrogant Frenchmen. The French also seemed to be swallowed up by a sudden opening up of the earth. Finally, Boso reported that:

Over several miles of the plain I saw an innumerable multitude of women, and while I was marvelling at such a crowd of them I learned from my guide that *these were the wives of priests*. “Eternal woe and the atrocious torment of the flames of hell,” he said, “await these miserable women and those who were consecrated for offering service to God but yet were not afraid to involve themselves in the lascivious affairs of the flesh”⁸⁸.

This was a clear reference to the dreadful fate that awaited priests and the women with whom they cohabited.

Given that there was no specific injunction in the Rule of St Benedict denying women access to churches in the care of monastic communities beyond the requirement that inmates observe their vow of chastity, nor that early accounts of St Cuthbert’s life provide any evidence of his misogyny, it is surprising that the Church of Durham would exclude so many worshippers and potential donors. There are, however, indications that the prohibition against women entering the ecclesiastical precinct at Durham might not have been as effectively enforced as Symeon suggested. Almost as soon as he instigated the prohibition, Cuthbert mitigated its effects. In order to cater for the spiritual needs of the excluded women, Cuthbert built a *Grene Cyrice* [“Green Church”] on the island of Lindisfarne where his episcopal church was based⁸⁹. Other extant sources indicate that women were welcomed by the monastic community. In addition there are also clear signs that by the end of the 12th century, if not sooner, special arrangements were being made at Durham cathedral to accommodate the needs of pious women who wished to worship near Cuthbert’s shrine.

From at least the beginning of the 11th century, women were allowed burial in the cemetery at Durham⁹⁰. They may even have been allowed to reside in the ecclesiastical precinct as nuns or anchoresses under the protection of St Cuthbert⁹¹. Before 1083 the priests serving the shrine of St Cuthbert were married which also suggests that until the introduction of the *Rule of St Benedict* the local community saw nothing scandalous in the prevailing arrangements. In fact there were families in Durham who were proud to trace their descent from the 9th-century bearers of St Cuthbert’s coffin during the period of wandering after leaving Lindisfarne⁹². Women had, therefore, a vital role in the transmission of the traditions of the community of the Church of St Cuthbert.

Ascelina, mother of the cathedral-priory’s founder, Bishop William, was remembered, along with hundreds of other women, in the Durham *Liber Vitae* [“Book of Life”],

which recorded the names of those for whom the monks of Durham had pledged to pray⁹³. The *Liber Vita* also included the text of an agreement [*conventio*] between the monks and King Malcolm III of Scotland and his wife, Margaret⁹⁴. In addition, it is likely that a life of the saintly Queen Margaret was written by Prior Turgot⁹⁵. There are also accounts of miraculous cures being granted to women through the intervention of St Cuthbert suggesting that the great Northumbrian thaumaturge did not neglect the prayers of his female suppliants⁹⁶. Finally, towards the end of the 12th century another notorious bishop of Durham known for his contentious relationship with the monks of the cathedral priory began to build modify the West End of St Cuthbert's Church. Bishop Hugh du Puiset (1154-95) added the Galilee chapel specifically to cater for women visitors to the shrine⁹⁷. Taken together these pieces of evidence hardly suggest that institutionalised misogyny operated in the Church of Durham and they warn us that we should be wary of taking Symeon's account too much at face value.

However, the memory of the tradition of St Cuthbert's antipathy towards women survived into the 16th century and there are indications that certain areas within the ecclesiastical precinct at Durham remained prohibited to female visitors⁹⁸. The dissolution of the cathedral-priory at Durham after 1539 and the reintroduction of a secular dean and chapter marked the end of monastic rule in the Church of St Cuthbert⁹⁹. Nevertheless, it seems that long before that date and despite the claims made by Symeon in the early twelfth century, it is to be doubted whether women were ever successfully excluded from the "sacred space" surrounding the shrine of the great Northumbrian saint.

Landscapes, whether urban or rural, are invested with meaning by those who interact with them¹⁰⁰. Essential in these interactions are the physical and mental boundaries which human beings erect in order to make sense of their environment. Boundaries mark lines of friction and represent the point of contact between different interests. Boundaries might also represent the triumph of a particular party or indicate that a compromise has been reached. In either case they show where assumptions and rights have been challenged and defined. The presence of St Cuthbert's relics at Durham transformed the city into a sacred landscape. Within this landscape there were differing zones of sanctity, the boundaries of which had to be patrolled and enforced. This chapter has examined an aspect of the ecclesiastical precinct surrounding the Church of St Cuthbert in medieval Durham, namely the tradition of the exclusion of women. The boundary of this "sacred space" may have been marked by a fence but it was enforced by supernatural means. The actions of this medieval saint, acting as border guard and gatekeeper, remind us that frontiers and boundaries are as much phenomena created in the mind and patrolled by systems of belief, as they are physical barriers. Similarly, it is in the nature of tradition to seem fixed and immemorial, whereas, in fact, it is a constantly evolving phenomenon. This chapter has suggested that the tradition of the misogyny of St Cuthbert was invented in the early 12th century to meet specific needs and that

it was continually re-negotiated, sometimes enforced and sometimes allowed to lapse. The urban boundaries of misogyny in Medieval Durham responded accordingly.

NOTES

- ¹ I am grateful to Peter Coss and Nicola Whyte, my colleagues at Cardiff University, for discussing aspects of this chapter and for providing valuable bibliographical references. My thanks also to Ian Dennis for preparing the map.
- ² Tostig was Earl of Northumbria between 1055 and 1065. He was the brother of Harold Godwinson, who as King of England was defeated by Duke William of Normandy at the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066. For Tostig's career, see W. M. Aird, *Tostig, earl of Northumbria (c.1029-1066)*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27571, accessed 13 November 2007]. Judith, the daughter of Count Baldwin IV of Flanders (988-1035), had married Earl Tostig in the autumn of 1051 when he was in exile in Flanders. See Elisabeth van Houts, *Judith of Flanders, duchess of Bavaria (1030x35-1095)*, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54458, accessed 13 Nov 2007]. For Baldwin IV of Flanders, see D. Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, London 1992, pp. 45-9.
- ³ D. Rollason (ed. and trans.), *Symeon of Durham, Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie. Tract on the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham*, Oxford 1998, pp. 176-7: *Puella ergo, domine sue uoluntate agnita, hora secretiori ad hoc temptandum conata est aggredi. Iam pedem intra cimiterium erat positura, cum subito ueluti uentorum uiolentia repelli cepit et uiribus deficere, et grauiter infirmata uix ad hospitium ualuit redire, decidensque in lectum, graui torquebatur cruciatu, tandem dolore cum uita caruit.*
- ⁴ Symeon, *Libellus de exordio*, pp. 176-7: *Hoc facto comitissa uehementer exterrita contremuit, atque humiliter satisfaciendo, imaginem crucifixi (que – sicut in sequentibus dicitur – a raptoribus suo fuerat spoliata ornatu) imaginem quoque sancta Dei genitricis Marie et Iohannis Euangeliste ipsa et eius coniunx fieri iusserunt et auro argenteoque uestierunt, aliaque perplura ad decorum ecclesie obtulerunt.*
- ⁵ On memory and material objects, see Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200*, London 1999.
- ⁶ For St Cuthbert's prohibition on women entering his churches, see V. Tudor, *The Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert*, in "Archaeologia Aeliana", 5th Series, 1984, 12, pp. 157-67.
- ⁷ In some manuscript copies of Symeon, *Libellus de exordio*, the story of Barcwith was inserted at this point; see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 176-7 and n. 52. Cf. B. Colgrave, *The Post-Bedan Miracles and Translations of St Cuthbert* in C. Fox, B. Dickins (eds.), *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe (H.M. Chadwick Memorial Studies)*, Cambridge 1950, pp. 307-332 and W.M. Aird, *The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection: The Liber de Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti*, in "Northern History", 1992, XXVIII, pp. 1-24.
- ⁸ *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*. Cap.V: *Quomodo miles comitis Tostii, nomine Barcwith, dum ianuas monasterii eius infringere cupit, subito percussus interierit*, in T. Arnold (ed.), *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 vols., London 1882, I, p. 243: *Dum igitur Tostius, comes ille cunctis notissimus, in partibus Northanhumbranis comitatutum administraret, quidam prave actionis vir, nomine Aldan-Hamal, ab eo comprehensus, compedibus artissime constringitur. Multa enim mala fecerat; furtis atque rapinis, homicidis atque incendiis comitem sepe offenderat, nec unquam prius comprehendendi poterat. Cuius parentes et amici, compassionis affectu permoti, multa pro eo ne capite plecteretur comiti offerebant, et plura promittebant. At ille, quia totiens tantisque malefactis eum irritauerat, nullum se pro vita ipsius auri vel argenti, aut cuiusquam alterius rei commodum vel respicere uelle iuravit. Tunc ille animo conseruantes, solum sibi cogitabat esse remedium si, quoquomodo uinculis expeditus, beatissimi patris Cuthberti*

confugisset ad monasterium. In eadem quipped villa qua ipse corpore requiescit, hoc est in Dunelmo, tunc custodiebatur.

- ⁹ *Capitula de Miraculis*, p. 244: “Quid,” inquit, “moramur? Quare ianuas non infringimus? Neque enim huius hominis mortui pax a Deo est tenenda, ut fures, raptores, et homicide, huc si confugerint, nobis insultent quod impuniti evaserint.” Sic miser ille ore loquebatur contumelioso; furoris enim magnitudo effecerat, ut quid loqueretur ipse ignoraret. Sed vix verba compleverat, ecce! Subito quasi sagitta desuper veniens, caputque sibi transverberans, ad cor usque suum pertingeret, sibi visum esse protestabatur.
- ¹⁰ *Capitula de Miraculis*, p. 245: Denique a suis ad hospitium deportatur; nec unum postea verbum proloquens, in eisdem tormentis ad diei tertii eandem usque horam supervixit. Sed et illo tandem ita defuncto atque sepulto, talis tantusque de tumulo ipsius fetor per dimidium spatium anni exhalavit, ut vie transitum per id loci omnes fugerent.
- ¹¹ *Capitula de Miraculis*, p. 245.
- ¹² See Map 1.
- ¹³ J. Raine (ed.), *Dialogi Laurentii Dunelmensis Monachi ac Prioris*, Surtees Society, LXX, Durham 1880, p. 8, lines 271-8 and p. 9, lines 297-301.

Consurgit in ardua tellus,
Et saxosa pedes, et salebrosa larus:
Undique declivis præruptaque summonet hostem,
Ludit et hostiles flumine cincta manus.
Flumen eam ferri præceps obit instar equini,
Circinat excelsum, vallis aquosa locum:
Quod tamen ille locus, locus arduus, insula non est,
Hoc dirimens fluvii cornua collis agit.

At solidi suprema loci prælargâ serenat
Planities, æquum terra cacumen habet.
Collis vero plagam supereminet ad borealem,
Cætera planitie celsus amænâ apex.
Ecce! quibus natura modis rem munit habetis.

The translation is from A.G. Rigg, *Lawrence of Durham: Dialogues and Easter Poem: A Verse Translation* in “Journal of Medieval Latin”, 7, 1997, pp. 42-126 at 52. On the career of Prior Lawrence of Durham (1149-54), and his literary works, see A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066-1422*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 54-61. Prior Lawrence’s description followed the conventions of the *locus amoenus* [“pleasant place”] *topos* also found in a late 11th-century poem, *De Situ Dunelmi*: D. Howlett, *The shape and meaning of the Old English poem “Durham”* in D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (eds.), *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, Woodbridge 1994, pp. 485-95, and H.S. Offler, *The date of Durham* (Carmen de situ Dunelmi), in “Journal of English and Germanic Philology”, 61, 1962, pp. 591-4.

- ¹⁴ Before moving to Durham the Community of St Cuthbert occupied Chester-le-Street which had been a Roman fort; see E. Cambridge, *Why did the Community of St Cuthbert Settle at Chester-le-Street?* in G. Bonner, C. Stancliffe and D. Rollason (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community to AD 1200* Woodbridge 1989, pp. 367-86.
- ¹⁵ According to Symeon of Durham’s *Libellus de exordio*, in 995 the community moved from Chester-le-Street to Ripon in order to escape renewed Viking attacks on the North of England; see Symeon, *Libellus de exordio*, pp. 144-7. See M.O.H. Carver, P.F. Gosling, *The Archaeology of Durham City* in P.A.G. Clack and P.F. Gosling (eds.), *Archaeology in the North: the report of the Northern Archaeological Society*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1976, pp. 133-45; M. O. H. Carver, *Early Medieval Durham: the Archaeological Evidence*, in Nicola Coldstream, P. Draper (eds.), *Medieval Art and Architecture at*

Durham Cathedral. The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the year 1977, Leeds 1980, pp. 11-19.

- ¹⁶ Symeon, *Libellus de exordio*, pp. 148-9: *Igitur prefatus antistes [Ealdhun] totius populi auxilio, et comitis Northanhymbrorum Vhtredi adiutorio totam extirpans siluam succidit, ipsumque locum in breui habitabilem fecit. Denique a flumine Coqued usque Tesam uniuersa populorum multitudo tam ad hoc opus quam ad construendam postmodum ecclesiam prompto animo accessit, et donec perficeretur deuota insistere non cessauit.* ["So the aforesaid bishop [Ealdhun], with the assistance of Uhtred, earl of the Northumbrians, cut down and uprooted the whole forest and soon made the place habitable. Later a multitude of people from the whole area between the river Coquet and the river Tees readily came to help not only with this task but also afterwards with the construction of the church, and they persevered devotedly until it was finished."] The boundaries of the catchment area that provided the work-force for the clearing of the site presumably reflect the extent of the Community's landholdings at this time; see W.M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans, The Church of Durham, 1071-1153*, Woodbridge 1998, pp. 46-7 and n. 137.
- ¹⁷ The foundation of the present cathedral church was marked in 1093 by a ceremony in which King Malcolm III of Scotland (1057-93) participated. See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio*, pp. 244-45 and M.G. Snape, *Documentary evidence for the building of Durham Cathedral and its monastic buildings*, in Coldstream, Draper, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral* cit., pp. 20-36. M. Jarrett and H. Mason, 'Greater and More Splendid'. *Some Aspects of Romanesque Durham Cathedral*, "The Antiquaries Journal", 75, 1995, pp. 189-233.
- ¹⁸ Durham's castle has been greatly modified since its 11th-century foundation; see M. Leyland, *The Origins and Development of Durham Castle*, in Rollason, et al. (eds.), *Anglo-Norman Durham*, pp. 407-24. J. Raine, *A Brief Historical Account of the Episcopal Palace of Auckland*, Durham 1852.
- ¹⁹ The powerful Neville family were the patrons of the Church of St Mary in the South Bailey at Durham; see M. Harvey, *Lay Religious Life in Late Medieval Durham*, Woodbridge 2006, p. 16. For the division of lordship see M. Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community. Durham and Its Overlords, 1250-1540*, Cambridge 1990,
- ²⁰ Jean Scammell, *The Origins and Limitations of the Liberty of Durham*, "English Historical Review", 81, 1966, pp. 449-73.
- ²¹ See references in n.19 above.
- ²² Harvey, *Lay Religious Life*, pp. 3-4; see Map 1.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ²⁴ For an introduction to this subject, see D.M. Palliser, T.R. Slater, E. Patricia Dennison, *The Topography of Towns, 600-1300* in D.M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*. Volume 1: 600-1300, Cambridge 2000, pp. 153-86. On medieval urban centres more generally, see D. Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City. From Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century*, London - New York 1997 and K.D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000-1450*, Basingstoke, 2002.
- ²⁵ For the technique of plan analysis in an English context see M.R.G. Conzen, *Alnwick, Northumberland: a study of town plan analysis*, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, vol. 27, London 1960. See also, K.D. Lilley, *Mapping the medieval city: plan analysis and urban history*, in "Urban History", 27, 1, 2000, pp. 5-30 which looks at the development of medieval Coventry. On the occupational topography of late medieval Durham, see Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community* cit., pp. 161-8.
- ²⁶ M. Parker Pearson, C. Richards, *Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space and Time*, in M. Parker Pearson, C. Richards, *Architecture and Order. Approaches to Social Space*, London 1994, pp. 1-37. See also B. A. Hanawalt, M. Kobialka (eds.), *Medieval Practices of Space*, Minneapolis, London 2000.
- ²⁷ For a discussion of the relationship between Christian liturgy and its urban setting in the late antique and early medieval context, see J.F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins*,

- Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 228, Rome 1987. See also B.A. Hanawalt, K.L. Reyerson (eds.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, Minneapolis, London 1994 and J. Rahel Oesterle, *The Liturgical Dimension of Royal Representation* in P. Trio, M. De Smet (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Sacred Places in Late Medieval Towns*, Leuven 2006, pp. 103-15. Marcia Kupfer has studied the interrelationship between religious practice and geographical space at the level of the parish in central France; see *eadem*, *Symbolic Cartography in a Medieval Parish: From Spatialized Body to Painted Church at Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher*, in "Speculum", 75, 3, 2000, pp. 615-67.
- ²⁸ Harvey, *Lay Religious Life*, pp. 32, 35 and 38. Important as a guide to liturgical practices in late medieval Durham is J.T. Fowler (ed.), *Rites of Durham, being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression. Written, 1593, Surtees Society*, 107, 1902. For processions, see *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- ²⁹ R. Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, London - Boston, MA, 1994.
- ³⁰ M.T. Clanchy, *Reading the Signs at Durham Cathedral*, in Karen Schousboe and M.T. Larsen (eds.), *Literacy and Society*, Copenhagen 1989, pp. 171-82.
- ³¹ Some monasteries, for example the great Burgundian abbey of Cluny, succeeded in placing themselves directly under the protection of the papacy: see B.H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space. Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe*, Ithaca, NY 1999, pp. 163-68, and Id., *To be the neighbour of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049*, Ithaca, NY 1989.
- ³² J. Barrow, *Urban cemetery location in the high Middle Ages*, in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns. Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100-1600*, Leicester - London - New York 1992, pp. 78-100. There were rituals devised for hallowing cemeteries: see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space* cit., pp. 178 and 181.
- ³³ Palliser, *et al.*, *The Topography of Towns* cit., pp. 127-45. Durham's medieval cathedral and its claustral buildings still dominate the plateau in the heart of the city.
- ³⁴ The work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas has been influential on this characterisation of the boundaries between the ecclesiastical precinct and the secular world: M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London 1966.
- ³⁵ R. Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: the evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape*, Woodbridge 2005, p. 11. See also L.V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300. Space, gender and social pressure*, Woodbridge 2007, and D. M. Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100-1389*, New York - London 2003.
- ³⁶ It is possible to apply the spatial technique of "access analysis" in order to trace the relative sacrality of different parts of these ecclesiastical precincts. See B. Hillier, J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space*, Cambridge 1984. For the technique in practice see R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women*, London 1994.
- ³⁷ Here anthropological concepts of *tapu* (taboo) have been influential: see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space* cit., pp. 18-20.
- ³⁸ See for example, P.J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca - London 1994.
- ³⁹ In Old English this "Church Peace" was known as *ciric grid*: see D. Hall, *The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert*, in Bonner *et al.* (eds.), *St Cuthbert* cit., pp. 425-36 at 428. See Marjan De Smet, *Heavenly quiet and the din or war: Use and abuse of religious buildings for purposes of safety, defence and strategy* in Trio, De Smets, *The Use and Abuse of Sacred Places* cit., pp. 1-26.
- ⁴⁰ G. Rosser, *Sanctuary and Social Negotiation in Medieval England*, in J. Blair - B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and the World: essays in medieval history in honour of Barbara Harvey*, Oxford 1996, pp. 57-79.

- ⁴¹ On the legal development of sanctuary in medieval England see R.M. Helmholz, *The Law of Sanctuary* in Id., *The Ius Commune in England. Four Studies*, Oxford 2001, pp. 16-81.
- ⁴² P. Draper, *Enclosures and entrances in medieval cathedrals: access and security*, in Janet Backhouse (ed.), *The Medieval English Cathedral: Papers in Honour of Pamela Tudor-Craig*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 10, Donington 2003, pp. 76-88.
- ⁴³ See Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close* cit., pp. 12-7. The great Benedictine abbeys tended to occupy urban sites, whereas those of the new orders of the 12th century such as the Cistercians were often located in rural areas away from centres of population: see J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 63-84 and 131-58.
- ⁴⁴ Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy* cit., pp. 127-52.
- ⁴⁵ The *Libellus de Exordio* appears to have been written between the opening of Cuthbert's tomb in August 1104 and 1107 or 1109, the date when Turgot relinquished the office of prior at Durham after his election as Bishop of St Andrews in Scotland. Therefore the completion of the text was before 1107, possibly 1109 or, at the latest 1115, the date of Turgot's death: see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. xx and xlii.
- ⁴⁶ B. Colgrave (ed. and trans.), *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, Cambridge, 1940 and T. Johnson South, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto. A History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of his Patrimony*, Woodbridge 2002.
- ⁴⁷ Tudor, *The Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert* cit., pp. 157-8, noting Cuthbert's positive relationship with two women, Kenswith his former nurse and a certain Abbess Verca.
- ⁴⁸ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 104-7: *Quod tamen a malitia inhabitantium in eo contigisse, omnes qui nouere facillime potuerunt aduertere. Erant siquidem in eodem loco diuersis tamen separate mansionibus monachorum sanctimonialiumque congregationes, qui paulatim a regularis discipline statu defluentes, inhonesta inuicem familiaritate decipiendi occasionem inimico prebuerant. Nam et domunculas que ad orandum uel legendum facte fuerant, in commessationum, potationum, confabulationum, et ceterarum cubilia illecebrarum conuertebant.* On the date of the fire which occurred before 687, see R. Bartlett, *The Miracles of St Æbbe of Coldingham and St Margaret of Scotland*, Oxford 2003, p. xiv.
- ⁴⁹ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 106-7.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 108-9: *Que consuetudo usque hodie diligenter obseruatur, in tantum ut nisi metus hostilis uel concrematio loci compellat, nec in cimiteria quidem ipsarum ecclesiarum ubi ad tempus corpus eius requieuerat, mulieribus introire liceat.*
- ⁵² On the significance of this episode, see D. Rollason, *The Wanderings of St Cuthbert* in Id. (ed.), *Cuthbert, Saint and Patron*, Durham 1987, pp. 45-59 and Aird, *St Cuthbert* cit., pp. 32-5.
- ⁵³ For example, the attack led by King Duncan I of Scotland in 1040: Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 168-9. *Haliwerfolc*, literally the "people (*folc*) of the saint (*halig wer*)", was a local name for the inhabitants of the lands of the Church of St Cuthbert, which came to refer to the land they inhabited.
- ⁵⁴ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 108-9.
- ⁵⁵ Unfortunately Symeon does not name his source.
- ⁵⁶ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 108-9.
- ⁵⁷ At this point in one of the manuscripts of the *Libellus* there is an erasure. Were other examples of Cuthbert's misogyny erased? Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 110 and n. 60. See also D. Rollason, *The Making of the Libellus de Exordio: the evidence of erasures and alterations in the two earliest manuscripts*, in D. Rollason (ed.), *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, Stamford 1998, pp. 140-56.

- ⁵⁸ There is no sense that these stories were an attack on the morals of the Anglo-Saxons by their new Norman lords.
- ⁵⁹ Medieval monks were also supposed to carry the idea of enclosure in their minds even when they left the physical boundaries of their cloisters: see Hicks, *Religious Life* cit., pp. 94-5.
- ⁶⁰ It is also significant that the maid servant was punished rather than Countess Judith, a generous benefactress to the Church of St Cuthbert.
- ⁶¹ For a discussion of the attitudes of the 10th- and 11th-century Anglo-Saxon clergy towards women, see C. Cubitt, *Virginity and Misogyny in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England* in "Gender and History", 12, 1, 2000, pp. 1-32.
- ⁶² C. W. Bynum, *Wonder*, "American Historical Review", 102:1, 1997, pp. 1-26.
- ⁶³ J. Raine (ed.), *Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus quae novellis patratae sunt temporibus*, Surtees Society, 1, Durham, 1835. See Tudor, *The Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert* cit., pp. 157 and 160-1. For a brief account of Reginald of Durham (or Coldingham), see Rigg, *Anglo-Latin Literature* cit., pp. 97-8. See also Sally Crumplin, *Modernizing St Cuthbert: Reginald of Durham's miracle collection*, in K. Cooper, J. Gregory, *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church*, "Studies in Church History", 41, 2005, pp. 179-91.
- ⁶⁴ J. Stevenson (ed.), *Reginald of Durham, Libellus de vita et miraculis S. Godrici, heremitae de Finchale*, Surtees Society 20, Durham 1845, p. 403, cited in Tudor, *The Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert*, p. 157.
- ⁶⁵ Tudor, *The Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert* cit., p. 157.
- ⁶⁶ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 224-35.
- ⁶⁷ W.M. Aird, *An Absent Friend: The Career of Bishop William of Saint-Calais*, in Rollason (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Durham* cit., pp. 283-97.
- ⁶⁸ Whether the Anglo-Saxon Church was in need of reform is a much-debated question. For a positive evaluation of the English church and its bishops before 1066, see M. F. Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge 2007. For Lanfranc, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc. Scholar, Monk, and Archbishop*, Oxford 2003, pp. 120-43.
- ⁶⁹ This was a legacy of the 10th-century reformation of many English churches and was advocated by Archbishop Lanfranc and those of his episcopal colleagues who were also monks: see J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Oxford 2005, pp. 341-67 and Cowdrey, *Lanfranc* cit., pp. 149-74.
- ⁷⁰ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 260-61. An attempt by Bishop William's predecessor, Walcher, to reform the community appears to have failed: *Ibid.*, pp. 194-7.
- ⁷¹ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 230-31: *Eos uero qui prius inibi habitauerant, nomen tantum canonicorum habentes, sed in nullo canonicorum regulam sequentes, precepit ut si in ipsa ecclesia residere uellent, deinceps in monachico proposito cum monachis uitam agerent*. There has been debate over the inconsistencies in Symeon's account especially concerning the fate of the members of the pre-monastic community: see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 230, note 20. The present author has argued that there was greater continuity in the personnel of Durham cathedral across 1083: see Aird, *St Cuthbert* cit., pp. 100-41.
- ⁷² The monks were drawn from the nearby recently re-founded monasteries at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth: see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 200-11 and A. Dawtry, *The Benedictine Revival in the North: the Last Bulwark of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism?* in "Studies in Church History", 18, 1982, pp. 87-98.
- ⁷³ For Ranulf's career see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, Appendix B: Continuation beginning "Tribus de hinc annis", pp. 266-81 and R.W. Southern, *Ranulf Flambard and Early Anglo-Norman Administration*, in "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society", 4th series, 16, 1933, revised as *Ranulf Flambard*

- in *idem.*, *Medieval Humanism and Other Essays*, Oxford 1970, pp. 183-205. Cf. H.S. Offler, *Ranulf Flambard as Bishop of Durham, 1099-1128*, "Durham University Journal", 64, 1971, pp. 14-25.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18: "Ranulf's was not a naturally Benedictine soul." Before Ranulf came to Durham, there had been a three-year vacancy in the bishopric during which the power of the prior, Turgot, had risen. In the absence of a bishop-abbot, the prior was the leading ecclesiastical figure in the diocese. According to Symeon of Durham, William of Saint-Calais had made the prior his archdeacon, that is his deputy in diocesan affairs: Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 244-7. See also H.S. Offler, *The early archdeacons in the diocese of Durham*, in "Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland", 11, 1962, pp. 193-202.
- ⁷⁵ For example, he granted land to his nephew Richard and a certain "William, son of Rannulf", perhaps the son of another nephew: H.S. Offler (ed.), *Durham Episcopal Charters*, 1071-1152, Surtees Society, 179, 1968, nos. 11 and 23, pp. 72-4 and 100-6; cf. Aird, *St Cuthbert* cit., pp. 203-7.
- ⁷⁶ On his death bed Bishop Ranulf made formal restitution to the monks of the properties he had wrongfully taken from them [*omnia que eis uoluntate et cupiditate mea abstuleram*]: see Offler, *Durham Episcopal Charters*, no. 25, pp. 112-4. As well as continuing work on the cathedral, Bishop Ranulf built a border castle at Norham-on-Tweed and a hospital in Durham: see Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 276-7 and Offler, *Rannulf Flambard* cit., pp. 19-25.
- ⁷⁷ N.E.S.A. Hamilton (ed.), *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, Rolls Series, London 1870, p. 274 n.5: *Et, ut magis religionem irritaret, puellas speciosissimas, que essent procatoris formæ et faciei, eis potum propinare iuberet, strictis ad corpus vestibus, solutis in terga crinibus. Ibi ergo erat videre ludibrium*. Cf. translation by D. Preest, *William of Malmesbury, The Deeds of the Bishops of England (Gesta Pontificum Anglorum)*, Woodbridge 2002, p. 184 and n.4.
- ⁷⁸ According to William of Malmesbury, Bishop Ranulf "grew so bold that he did not hesitate to drag away guilty persons who sought sanctuary in the church of the saint, thus daring a crime unheard of in all the years of the past": Preest, *The Deeds of the Bishops* cit., p. 184; William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum*, p. 274: *Sed uno et altero delicto commisso, nec vindicato, eo processit, ut reum, si quando ad ecclesiam Sancti confugeret, abstrahere non dubitaret, ausus scelus omnibus retro annis inauditum*.
- ⁷⁹ W.M. Aird, *The Political Context of the Libellus de Exordio*, in Rollason (ed.), *Symeon of Durham* cit., pp. 32-45.
- ⁸⁰ E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.
- ⁸¹ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 196-9: *Post tempus aliquot quendam uocabulo Rannulfum illo miserat, qui ipsius sancti populum regi tributum soluere compelleret. Quod illi grauiter ferentes (scilicet quod nouas consuetudines cogerentur subire), consuetum in aduersis sancti Cuthberti auxilium studebant inquirere. Nocte igitur qua finita tributum populo erat impositurus, beatus Cuthbertus ei per somnium assistens, baculo pastorali quem manu gestabat illum impulit, et auctoritate pontificali et uultu minaci increpauit, quod illuc ad populum suum affligendum ausus fuerit uenire, dicens quod non impune hoc presumpserit, et nisi cito recederet peiora passurus esset*. ["Some time later the king sent there (i.e. Durham) a certain man called Ranulf, who was to compel the people of St Cuthbert to pay tribute to the king. They took this badly, because it meant that they were being subjected to new customs, and they devoted their efforts to seeking the aid which St Cuthbert usually gave them in adversity. So during the night before the day on which the tribute was to be imposed on the people, St Cuthbert appeared to Ranulf in a dream, struck him with the pastoral staff which he held in his hand, rebuked him with episcopal authority and with a threatening countenance that he should have dared to have come there to afflict his people, and told him that he had not presumed to do this with impunity, and that he would suffer still worse if he did not go away quickly."] It is interesting to note that the boundaries of the bishopric were significant in that Ranulf's punishment only ceased when he crossed out of St Cuthbert's lands. The southern boundary was the River Tees and another tale recorded by Symeon describes a "terrible heat" visited upon

King William the Conqueror who had dared to threaten the Church of St Cuthbert: Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 196-7.

- ⁸² Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 276-7: *Locum inter ecclesiam et castellum, quem multa occupauerant habitacula in patentis campi redegit planitiem, ne uel sordibus contaminatio, uel ex ignibus ecclesiam attingerent pericula*. ["The space between the church and the castle, which had been occupied by many dwellings, he made as flat and open as a field, so that the church should be affected neither by the contamination of their filth, nor the danger of fires."]. This area is now known as Palace Green (marked as *placea* on Map 1): see Carver, *Early Medieval Durham* cit., pp. 15-6. It must be admitted that the continuator of Symeon's *Libellus de Exordio* found it difficult wholly to condemn Bishop Ranulf, probably due to the fact that much of what he abstracted from the monastic estate was reinvested in the diocese in the form of the extensive building works. He also presided over a splendid translation of the relics of the saint into the new cathedral in 1104: Arnold, *Symeonis Opera Omnia* cit., I, pp. 247-61. Cf. the praise for Ranulf in Prior Lawrence's *Dialogi* cit., p. 65, from line 231.
- ⁸³ C.N.L. Brooke, *Gregorian reform in action: Clerical Marriage in England, 1050-1200*, in "Cambridge Historical Journal", 13, 1956, pp. 1-21.
- ⁸⁴ On medieval theories about women's bodies see, for example, C.T. Wood, *The doctors' dilemma: sin, salvation, and the menstrual cycle in medieval thought*, in "Speculum", 56, 1981, pp. 701-727. Menstruating women were forbidden entry to the church. The medieval custom of "churching" women after childbirth was a ritual purification: see Harvey, *Lay Religious Life* cit., p. 48.
- ⁸⁵ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 172-3: *Hora uero qua sacrosancta mysteria sumere deberet, in calicem introspectit, et ecce particulam Dominici corporis que iuxta morem missa fuerat in calicem, ita cum sanguine in teterrimam speciem commutatam uidit, ut (sicut postea fatebatur) magis in calice picis colorem quam panis et uini conspiceret*.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 246-51.
- ⁸⁷ The fact that the confession was made to the prior who then imposed the penance might be seen as a challenge to the bishop's authority as these were usually his duties.
- ⁸⁸ Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 250-1.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-7.
- ⁹⁰ Tudor, *Misogyny of St Cuthbert* cit., p. 164.
- ⁹¹ An 11th-century tract known as the *De obsessione Dunelmi* ["Concerning the siege of Durham"] tells us that Bishop Ealdhun's daughter took the veil and was buried in the cemetery at Durham. T. Arnold (ed.), *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* cit., 2 vols., Rolls Series, London 1882 and 1885, I, p. 217: *...et postea uelamen accepit quod et bene seruauit usque ad extremum sui diem et sepulta in coemiterio Dunelmensi diem retributionis expectat*. ["...and afterwards she took the veil and served well until her last day and she was buried in the cemetery of Durham and awaits the Day of Judgement."].
- ⁹² Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 116-7: *Quorum quattuor qui tribus aliis maiores esse memorantur, hec fuerunt nomina: Hunred, Stitheard, Edmund, Franco, de quorum stirpe multi in Northanhymbrorum prouincia tam clerici quam laici se descendisse tanto magis gloriantur, quanto progenitores sui sancto Cuthberto fidelius deseruisse narrantur*. ["Four of these, who are remembered as being more important than the other three, had these names: Hunred, Stitheard, Edmund and Franco. Many of their descendants in the kingdom of the Northumbrians – clergy and laity – take pride that their ancestors are said to have St Cuthbert so faithfully."].
- ⁹³ The Durham *Liber Vitæ* is preserved as British Library, Cotton Manuscript, Domitian vii. See D. Rollason, A.J. Piper, M. Harvey, L. Rollason (eds.), *The Durham Liber Vitæ and its Context*, Woodbridge 2004.

- ⁹⁴ British Library, Cotton Manuscript, Domitian vii, fol. 48v. For discussion see Aird, *St Cuthbert* cit., pp. 228-9 and references therein.
- ⁹⁵ *Vita sancte Margarete Scotorum regine* in J. Hodgson Hinde (ed.), *Symeonis Dunelmensis opera et collectanea*, Surtees Society, 51, 1868, I, pp. 234-54. Cf. Bartlett, *Miracles of St Æbbe and St Margaret* cit., pp. xxix-xxxi.
- ⁹⁶ Examples given by Tudor, *Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert* cit., pp. 160-1. Rival cults such as the local one of St Godric at Finchale near Durham and the powerful cult of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury probably also influenced the policy of St Cuthbert's monks towards women.
- ⁹⁷ R. Halsey, *The Galilee Chapel*, in Coldstream and Draper, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral* cit., pp. 59-73. G.V. Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset. A Biography of the Twelfth-Century Bishop of Durham*, Cambridge 1956. Before the building of the Galilee chapel, it might be presumed that the majority of women worshipped in the city's six parish churches, four of which had female dedications (two to the Blessed Virgin, one to St Margaret and one to St Mary Magdalene).
- ⁹⁸ Fowler (ed.), *Rites of Durham*, pp. 34-7 and see Tudor, *Misogyny of Saint Cuthbert* cit., pp. 164-5.
- ⁹⁹ Harvey, *Lay Religious Life* cit., pp. 185-97.
- ¹⁰⁰ In another vision reported by Symeon, Ernan, a local man, was shown souls suffering the torments of Hell. Ernan's spirit guide led him to the southern side of the city of Durham where he "saw a valley of infinite depth full of the souls of men." For Ernan familiar landmarks provided recognition points in the geography of the Afterlife: Symeon, *Libellus de Exordio* cit., pp. 190-1.

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